Conference on Disarmament

17 June 2014

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and twentieth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 17 June 2014, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi.....(Kazakhstan)

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The President: I call to order the 1320th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we proceed, allow me to wish a warm welcome to Ambassador Ms. Marta Maúraz Pérez, who has recently assumed her functions as the Permanent Representative of Chile to the Conference on Disarmament. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my country, I would like to extend to our new colleague our very best wishes.

I would also like to inform the Conference that I recently met with the Informal Group of Observer States. During that meeting the Group requested the President to consider the possibility of appointing an informal position of Friend of the President on the issue of Conference on Disarmament membership enlargement, taking into account the absence of substantial discussions of that question within the last years in the Conference on Disarmament.

At the request of the Group, and following consultations on the results of the meeting including the P-6 and regional coordinators, I have decided to appoint the Ambassador of Albania, Ms. Filloreta Kodra, as Friend of the President on the issue of expansion of the membership. Ambassador Kodra will consult the President mainly on a bilateral basis on this subject, including possible scenarios, stages and aspects of enlargement, in order to build a bridge between the members and observers, and I thank you in advance for the support and cooperation that you would kindly extend to her.

Ambassador Kodra will fulfil her duties until the end of the 2014 session of the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the principle of continuity of the P-6, which does not, at the same time, prevent the Conference on Disarmament from other actions to be taken, namely negotiations.

I would like to devote today's meeting to informal discussion on the proposal made by Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament Mr. Michael Møller on 20 May 2014, and the follow-up details which he provided to us last week.

I will therefore open the floor to delegations to make any statement in the formal plenary and then adjourn the meeting to continue it in informal plenary. So now I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Czech Republic, Ms. Kateřina Sequensová.

Ms. Sequensová (Czech Republic): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak to you on behalf of the Informal Group of Observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. The observer States would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency and assure you of our support. We deeply appreciate your deliberate interest in the functioning of the Conference and your understanding of the need to expand the Conference on Disarmament in order to ensure universality of its instruments.

We would like to thank Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, for the four proposals on revitalizing the Conference introduced on 20 May, on which we shall provide several comments. We entirely share the Acting Secretary-General's analysis that it is high time the Conference on Disarmament considered some alternative ways forward to innovatively overcome the absence of consensus and political will. We therefore find his proposals very interesting.

We believe that both the idea of identifying areas of common ground with a view eventually to produce framework conventions and the idea of negotiating politically binding instruments are very promising. At the same time, we attach great importance to the question of the working methods that provide a procedural basis for substantive work. As we are currently witnessing a positive outcome of structured debates on core issues under the schedule of activities, we think that a subsidiary body should be established in order to explore ways on how best to render the Conference on Disarmament more efficient

and results-oriented. We are particularly of the view that, for example, the length of tenure of the presidency should be re-evaluated and revised.

It is well known that the fundamental cause of the Informal Group of Observer States is the expansion of the membership of the Conference, which is not only essential to the Conference on Disarmament but also of importance to the international community as a whole. Regrettably, the Conference on Disarmament does not devote sufficient time to this question. The Conference on Disarmament has neither included it into the schedule of activities, nor featured it in the programme of discussions in the plenaries.

It has been more than a decade since this body consulted this question, and more than 14 years without action being taken on the issue of enlargement. We think that a universal goal of international stability and security, on disarmament, must by definition be addressed by a universally represented body, reflecting developments in the global security environment.

Mr. President, that is why we welcome and appreciate your decision to appoint a Friend of the Conference on Disarmament President for enlargement. We are certain that such a decision will be conducive to better understanding of a variety of modalities and tailor-made scenarios for the Conference on Disarmament in the question of expansion. We assume that during consultations the Friend of the Conference on Disarmament President will have the possibility to foster convergent aspects and seek a common basis for future endeavours. We would like to congratulate the Ambassador of Albania, Ms. Filloreta Kodra, on assuming the post, and we want to wish her all the best to fulfil the noble task.

Mr. President, allow us to reaffirm that we are prepared to contribute to the restart of the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts in the Conference on Disarmament that are long overdue.

Mr. Zakov (Bulgaria): Mr. President, my delegation wishes to join those who expressed their appreciation of your personal commitment and dedication to making progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We cannot but commend your efforts for conducting a wide range of consultations on appointing a Friend of the Chair on the enlargement.

The political will of our predecessors when they established the Conference on Disarmament was not to create a closed club. Expanding the Conference on Disarmament membership has been envisaged already when creating this forum. It has happened several times, and it must continue. The Conference on Disarmament should be relevant to twenty-first-century realities, and it should prove legitimate also through its membership. Bulgaria is a firm and long-standing supporter of Conference on Disarmament enlargement. Appointing a Friend of the Chair on enlargement is a step in the right direction and proof that if there is a will there is a way.

The President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words addressed to the President. Is there any other delegation? Then before switching to the informal format, allow me to give the floor to the secretariat for an announcement.

Mr. Fung (Secretary of the Conference): This is just a short announcement regarding the pigeonholes. We recently distributed a number of documents including, in particular, the revised list of participants, and we urge you to visit these pigeonholes. Many of them, as I said earlier, are overflowing, and you need to check them frequently please. The revised list of participants is there now for those who have not yet seen it.

The President: In order to switch to the informal format of this plenary, allow me to suspend the meeting for three minutes to prepare the auditorium.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.